

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
December 15, 2014 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle's Town Hall

Members Present: David Bird, Chair
David Baldini
Joe DiAngelo
Jonathan Justice
Mike Quaranta
Vera Worthy

Members Absent: Daniel Bungy
Josephine Moore
Florence Smith

Also present: Mayor Donald Reese
Debbie Turner, Stenographer

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes – **A motion was made to approve the 10/27/14 minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved.**

A motion was made to approve the 11/17/14 minutes as distributed. Motion was seconded and the minutes were approved.

Budget Status – A budget report (summary and itemized expenditures) was distributed to Commissioners on 12/15/14 for review. No questions or comments were raised.

Commissioner's Comments/New Business

Mr. Quaranta spoke of an article in a business publication about multi-family housing becoming a more attractive housing choice, especially for the 25-35 year old demographic. This group has had lengthy discussions about multi-family housing in the Downtown Gateway (DG) zoning district. He suggested inviting Ed Rutledge from the University of Delaware to speak about demographics (who is moving to the area, who is moving away, what kinds of services they need, what is important to them, job market, education, health care needs, income, etc.) at a future meeting. The information could be interesting and helpful to Commissioners when making decisions in the DG zoning district. Everyone was receptive.

The City Code requires the Planning Commission to elect a Chairman on an annual basis. Brief discussion followed.

Mr. Baldini made a motion to nominate Mike Quaranta as Chairman for 2015. The motion was seconded and approved.

Mr. Justice made a motion to nominate David Baldini as Vice Chairman in 2015. The motion was seconded and approved.

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Old Business – Debbie Pfeil, City Planner, will provide updates on several outstanding topics at the January 2015 meeting.

- Status of discussions between the City and URS to address Planning Commission concerns that the Downtown Gateway (DG) Zoning Code and intent of the Code are not in alignment. Inconsistencies were raised at the 10/27/14 Planning Commission meeting. Specifically, not including 'commercial' in a project in the DG district is considered to be counter to the intent of the DG zoning district.
- Updates on the Comprehensive Plan Matrix and the status of the Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Clarification of the Planning Commission's role (authority/advisory) in approving sub-divisions. Also, under what circumstances is this body reviewing development proposals that comply with zoning, but do not involve sub-divisions.

Other Business

Mayor Reese said that two projects in the DG zoning district were recently approved by the City's Board of Adjustment. He anticipates more proposals for projects in the area. The Mayor also announced the City's status of a National Monument may be changing to a National Park, pending President Obama's signature on legislation.

The Planning Commission's next meeting is 1/26/15. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.